



The Application of Newmark's Semantic vs. Communicative Approach to Translating English Literary texts into Arabic

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to apply Newmark's approach to (10) excerpts from translations of Al-Jahmani (1999) and Hosny (2017) of The Pearl novella (1945) by the American author John Steinbeck in order to test the extent to which the translators choose the accurate and suitable approach. It was found that Al-Jahmani adopts communicative translation which aims to convey meaning and effect taking into consideration the target reader, a communicative translation is supposed to preserve the exact contextual meaning of the original text, so that both content and language are conveyed in a clearly meaningful way; communicative translation tends to create the same effect created by the SL text on the TL reader. Hosny, on the other hand, tends to use semantic translation which looks back to the ST and tries to preserve as many of its features as possible, it places a strong emphasis on the original text's author.

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تطبيق نهج نيومارك الترجمة المعنوية/الدلالية والترجمة التواصلية على ترجمة النصوص
الأدبية الإنجليزية إلى العربية
أصال نبيل عزيز *
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المستخلص :

تبنت الدراسة تطبيق نهج الترجمة المعنوية/الدلالية والترجمة التواصلية الذي وضعه العالم بيتر نيومارك حيث طُبِّق النهج على عشرة أمثلة من ترجمتي كل من يوسف الجهماني (1999) و محمود حسني (2017) لرواية "اللؤلؤة" للكاتب الأمريكي جون شتاينبك لاختبار مدى فاعلية كل منهما في الترجمة الأدبية، ووجد بأن كل مترجم تبني نهجاً مختلفاً عن الآخر، فقد اتخذ الجهماني منحى الترجمة التواصلية وعمد حسني إلى استعمال الترجمة الدلالية، علماً بأن الترجمة التواصلية تفضي إلى نقل المعنى السياقي الدقيق للأصل بحيث تكون اللغة والمضمون مقبولين ومفهومين للقراء بسهولة، و تحاول الترجمة الدلالية إعادة إنتاج المعنى السياقي الدقيق للأصل ولكنها تضيف قيمة جمالية للنص الهدف وتكون أكثر مرونة من الترجمة الحرفية مع فسح المجال للتغلغل البيهيمي للمترجم في النص الأصلي.

الكلمات المفتاحية : نيومارك، رواية اللؤلؤة، شتاينبك، خصائص.

List of Abbreviations

Abbreviations	Words
FL	Figurative Language
FE	Figurative Expressions
SL	Source Language
TL	Target Language
ST	Source Text
TT	Target Language

1.Newmark's Semantic and Communicative Approaches to Translation

Peter Newmark (1916-2011) is one of the most prominent scholars in the field of translation studies who is regarded as a keen supporter of the proficiency of translators. Newmark's Approaches to Translation (1981), A Textbook of Translation (1988), and Paragraphs on Translation (1991) present a framework for dealing with problems that arise throughout the translation process. He (1981:38) argues that the success of equivalent effect is 'illusory', and that the disparity between SL and TL emphasis will always be a major problem in translation theory and practice. Newmark (ibid:39) distinguishes between 'communicative' and 'semantic' translation as follows:

Communicative translation attempts to produce on its readers an effect as close as possible to that obtained on the readers of the original. Semantic translation attempts to render, as closely as the semantic and syntactic

structures of the second language allow, the exact contextual meaning of the original.

Munday in his book *Introducing Translation Studies* (2016:72) makes a comparison between Newmark's semantic and communicative approaches, indicating that the main distinction between the two types of translation is that the semantic one is concerned with meaning, whereas the communicative focuses on effect. To put it another way, semantic looks back to the ST and tries to preserve as many of its features as possible, its nature is more complicated, awkward, and detailed, with a tendency towards over-translate.

Conversely, the communicative approach concentrates on the requirements of the recipients, attempting to satisfy them as much as possible. In this regard, it tends to under-translate; resulting in a smoother, simpler, more straightforward, and easier-to-read text. The semantic approach is appropriate for serious literature, autobiography, and political statement. The communicative approach is appropriate for the vast majority of texts, such as non-literary writing, technical and informative texts, and popular fiction. With regard to culture, Newmark stresses that semantic translation remains within SL culture, whereas communicative transfers foreign elements into TL culture.

As a result, semantic translation places a strong emphasis on the original text's author. In contrast, communicative translation aims to reach wider recipients. It goes without saying that in the translation process, the communicative approach does not have to take precedence over the semantic one or vice versa. It's possible that in a literary text, a specific sentence requires communicative translation while another from the same text may require a semantic one. Hence, the two translation processes can be used in parallel, with different focuses for each.

Importantly, Newmark (1981: 39) believes that literal translation is the optimum approach as long as the same equivalent effect is achieved. In its extreme form, literal translation means word-for-word and, even in its weaker form, adheres to ST lexis and syntax:

In communicative as in semantic translation, provided that equivalent effect is secured, the literal word-for-word translation is not only the best, it is the only valid method of translation.

Furthermore, Newmark (*ibid*) as cited in Munday (2016:73) points out, however, that when the two types of translations are in conflict, communication should be preferred to avoid producing abnormal, odd-sounding, or semantically wrong results. To illustrate his point, he uses the example of the common sign "الكلب يعض", which should be translated pragmatically as "beware the dog!", in a communicative sense, rather than semantically as "dog that bites!", to ensure that the message is effectively communicated.

It follows from Newmark's (*ibid*:63) notion of semantic and communicative translation that in contrast to literal translation, semantic translation "respects context", SL-oriented, adheres to grammatical rules, interprets, and even gives an explanation (metaphors, for instance). On the other hand, literal translation signifies word-for-word in its extreme form and even in its weaker form, adheres very closely

to its ST lexicon and syntax.

2.Literary Translation

To deal with literary translation is not an easy task, indeed. This is due to the fact that once a translator tends to render a literary text, he has to keep in mind that he is dealing with both language and culture. What is more important is that they are integrated and interrelated too. It is from here that comes the necessity of understanding the culture of both SL and TL. This would really facilitate the choice of words and expressions used by the translator through conveying the message from ST into TT.

Language is the main social activity through which culture is conveyed through translation. Quite expectedly, then, many cultural problems may stem to the surface – and this is applicable to translating literary texts. This would even be more demanding if the ST language is not basically that of the translator's mother-tongue.

Accordingly, some mending strategies have to be instigated to help managing culture-bound expressions that are caused by cultural disparity. Dickins et al (2017:14) indicate that various substitutive ways can be used in such a case, like: making up a new expression explaining the awkward expression in translating it, keeping the SL original term (i.e., transliteration), or choosing a similar expression to that in the TL.

Before embarking on the act of translating any literary narrative text, it is worth noting that a translation is dealing with a distinctive feature of fiction: narration. Narration (ibid:17) deals with chronologically related events. A narrative text streams both language and story. The story – in turn – deals with a series of connected events performed by characters. Hence, appears the necessity of choosing a communicative approach to encompass the versatile components of the narrative text.

A communicative translation (ibid:41) is supposed to preserve the exact contextual meaning of the original text, so that both content and language are conveyed in a clearly meaningful way. Communicative translation tends to create the same effect created by the SL text on the TL reader.

In spite of the fact that such a translation does not stick to the original text, yet it communicates the meaning at the expense of accuracy. The good news, however, is that it is favored by many translators. This is because it deals with thoughts that are more familiar to the TL reader – concerning both cultural and social categories.

According to Newmark (1988:481) the main concern of communicative translation is with the message as the main force of the text. Therefore, the style, which is the container of the message, tends to be simple, clear, and brief; and is always written in a natural, penetrative way.

Newmark (1988:170) states that the short story is the second most challenging literary genre from a translator's perspective, but in this case, he is freed from the obvious limitations of poetry – metre and rhyme. Additionally, he has more freedom to spread out because the line is no longer a unit of meaning. As a result, his version will probably be a little longer than the original, though always, the shorter is preferable. He does not have to remove or confine cultural references, as in poetry or drama, to a note or glossary. Instead, he can include them directly in the text.

From Newmark's (1991:37) point of view in his book *About Translation*, the most peculiar

challenges in literary translation arise from the critical importance of SL and from its inherent role in meaning. Literary, technical, and cultural translation all have roles in imparting human values, Newmark (ibid) indicates that “literature in transmitting human values, culture in enriching a way of life and its language, technology in introducing inventions and innovations that improve health and living conditions.”

Translating literary texts could be achieved in three domains: lexical, syntactic, and pragmatic. In the lexical domain, the spirits of words are conveyed through language; in addition, the writer stresses the words which carry special aesthetic effects. Larson (1984:423) confirms that style is “a patterning choice of grammatical structures and lexicon in order to create a certain effect to carry out the intent of the author”.

As for the syntactic domain, literary writers use a variety of syntactic structures to achieve artistic effects. Nida (1964, in Venuti, 2000:154) states that the distinct nature of the message determines whether to give priority to form or content, which have mutually reinforced effect. He stresses that “the content of a message can never be completely abstracted from the form, and form is nothing apart from content”.

Regarding the pragmatic domain, pragmatic aspects of the ST should be taken into consideration, such as politeness, speech acts, presuppositions, deictic expressions, and implicatures. Gutt (2000:66) suggests that the primary goal of translation is to “communicate the meaning of the original accurately and clearly to the readers of the translation” Furthermore, each literary piece in translation possesses all of the linguistic significance associated with translation in general.

The literary work introduces notions to the reader and opens up new perspectives in which a familiar is perceived in a different way. Winter (1961:69) shares common ideas with Nida about the difficulties of translating literary text, they both relate the cause to the main differences between languages: “Although the system of form and meaning in language (A) may be similar to that in language (B), it is never identical to it.”

Babir (1963:155) identifies the quality of literary translation as “that experience by a reader of the translation which transports him to the atmosphere contained in the original through the medium of his own language without feeling that what he is reading is a translation and not an original work”. According to him, optimal translation “should be a lively expression of the flexibility and richness of the language into which it is done without sacrificing the flow and style of the original.”

Meanwhile, literary translation, which includes the translation of literary works: poetry, novels, short stories, theatre plays, and other genres, necessitates the translation of culture in which the story is set. The importance of culture is a prime issue for the translator and it is critical for him to work in a similar translation style to convey a similar message or meaning. With regard to culture, Schulte (1983:206) believes that the word gains meaning by itself but also in the environment of its context. Newmark (1988:94) defines culture as a community's way of life and the ways in which it is expressed via the use of a particular language. He clearly differentiates between personal, universal languages and cultural languages. Universal words like live, star, and swim typically have no translation problems. There will be a translation problem with terms like “monsoon”, (ريح موسمية هندية), “steppe”, (سهب/سهل)

(روسي) “tagliatelle” (نوع من معكرونة الباستا الإيطالية) which are specific cultural terms. Additionally, when a speech community focuses on a specific subject (this is sometimes referred to as a "cultural focus"), it generates a large number of terms to indicate its own unique language or terminology, such as English on sport, the French on wines and cheeses, and the Arabs on camels. There are often translation problems if there is a cultural focus because of the cultural gap or distance between SL and TL.

Landers (2001:4) believes that literary translation is a unique type that differs from other types of translation: commercial, technical, scientific, or propaganda. For him, it is a source of joy and pleasure to the target reader. The goal of literary translation is to pursue the ecstasy that the writer in the SL has reached, which can only be achieved by sharing the feelings of the writer during the translation process. Landers portrays the translator as a second-rate creator of the original literary work. He considers that the translator is primarily responsible for enabling the largest number of readers to see and learn about the culture and customs others, and this is what he confirms:

“Only literary translation lets one consistently share in the creative process. Here alone does the translator experience the aesthetic joys of working with great literature, of recreating in a new language a work that would otherwise remain beyond reach.” (ibid:5)

Baker (1997:127) in her Rutledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies, expresses a similar view of literary translation: “literary translation is the work of literary translators”. In the same way, Al-sayed (2007:66) argues that comparative literature presents literary translation as a bridge linking various works of literatures to each other. The role in building this bridge is entrusted to the translator, who is the main pillar in the whole process, who re-authors a new literary text and bears certain features of his personality that distinguish him from the original author.

Bassnett (2014:82) states that “the translator who does not try to know the rules of the translation process is like the driver of a Rolls who has no idea what makes the car move.” For her (ibid:83) “what creates most problems for translators when working on literary texts is their failure to understand that a literary text is made up of a complex set of systems, which are related to other sets outside its borders.” She (ibid:120) indicates that “most translators fail to consider the way in which every single sentence consists a part of the total structure”.

It is to be noted that the previous comments and definitions have avoided handling the subject of literary translation and focused their attention on the skills of the translator and his eligibility to translate literary works as a creative writer more than a transmitter translator.

Concerning figurative language, which is a significant aspect of style, it frequently entails notable interpretive effects that enrich its aesthetic value. Literary texts and reader perception depend heavily on FE, which include varied images like similes, metaphors, personifications, and hyperboles. The most challenges in literary translation, however, are lexical rather than grammatical, i.e. collocations, fixed words, and idioms. Translating hindrances are frequently caused by either comprehension problems or a lack of equivalence. It goes without saying that verbs, nouns, and adjectives can all be employed figuratively and so have figurative meaning.

2.1 Characteristics of Literary Translation

The translation methods, adopted by the translator, vary according to the types and natures of the texts to be translated, ranging from specialized scientific translation to creative literary translation. If the purpose of scientific translation is a purely informative aim, then the translator's purpose in literary texts is an aesthetic and expressive aim. Hence, the translator is obliged in his transfer of various texts, to take into account the peculiarities of these stylistic and linguistic texts. Literary texts, for example, are creative and aesthetically distinct with special stylistic features that draw the attention of the translator, who deals with them with great care, who makes literary translation not just an imitation of other texts, but rather works of new literary art.

It is worth mentioning that one of the main characteristics of the literary text is ambiguity. A sentence that may convey simple and direct content in a scientific text may express an odd form or a brief wisdom in the literary text. Textual characteristics can be added to literary texts to distinguish them from non-literary texts such as using "alliteration, metaphor, simile, assonance, or complex words".

Consequently, everything that has been said about literature can be said about literary translation as an integral part of literature. According to France (2000:21), literary translation in particular, often leaves an aesthetic effect on its readers equal to the same effect on the original reader. Literary translation like literature, has an aesthetic and expressive purpose. Therefore, it is read and interpreted as literature.

In this respect, it is worth mentioning the wonderful translations of (Sami Droubi) () of the masterpieces of the great Russian writer (Fyodor Dostoevsky).

Data Analysis and Discussion

Ex1: Ch3 – P34

Kino had found the Pearl of the World. The essence of pearl mixed with the essence of men and a curious dark residue was precipitated. Every man suddenly became related to Kino's pearl, and Kino's pearl went into the dreams, the speculations, the schemes, the plans, the futures, the wishes, the needs, the lusts, the hungers of everyone, and only one person stood in the way and that was Kino, so that he became curiously every man's enemy."

عثر كينو على لؤلؤة العالم. امتزجت روح الجوهرة بأرواح الرجال وأصبح الفضول الظلامي المتخلف " 1-Al-Jahmani مهيمنا عليهم. كل رجل أصبح معلقاً بعرقوبه بلؤلؤة كينو، وأصبحت لؤلؤة كينو موضوعاً لأحلام الجميع، انطلاقاً من المضاربة، مروراً بالمشاريع والخطط والمستقبل والرغبات والحاجات والشهوات، وصولاً إلى درء المجاعة، وذلك عند الجميع. وكان هناك رجل وحيد يقف "في قارعة الطريق، هو كينو، الذي من المؤكد أنه أصبح عدواً للجميع

لقد وجد كينو لؤلؤة العالم. امتزجت روح اللؤلؤة بروح الرجال، وترسب في النفوس بقايا ظلام غريب. أصبح كل " 2-Hosny رجل فجأة ذا علاقة بلؤلؤة كينو، ظهرت لهم في أحلامهم، أفكارهم، مشارعهم، خططهم، مستقبلهم، أمنيتهم، احتياجاتهم، شهواتهم، رغباتهم جميعاً. وأصبح الشخص الوحيد الذي يقف في طريقهم إليها هو كينو. لقد كان كينو – وبطريقة غريبة وغير مفهومة – عدو كل رجل في "البلدة

Discussion

Interpretation: "All kinds of people grow interested in Kino. Some are people with things to sell. Some are people who wanted help." The people show hostility and envy to Kino, everyone thinks of

how the discovery of the pearl would be of great benefit to him. Each one of the translators gives different translations for (curious) (متخلف) and (غريب). Al-Jahmani's addition for (انطلاقاً، مروراً، وصولاً) are very flow and beautiful style. In addition to (معلقاً بعرقوبه) he thinks that in order to increase the target's effectiveness, some modifications are needed. In Al-Jahmani's translation, the phrase "يقف في قارعة الطريق" is awkward, he may use: "يقف عقبة في وجه تحقيق أحلامه". Hosny opts for semantic style which is appropriate, he also intends to use "وبطريقة غريبة وغير مفهومة" deliberately to enhance the meaning.

Ex2: Ch 4 – P63

“The father made it clear that each man and woman is like a soldier sent by God to guard some part of the castle of the Universe.”

1-Al-Jahmani "والذي كان قد أوضح هذه الفكرة بأن أي رجل أو امرأة يشبه أو تشبهه" "الجندي الذي يرسله الله لحراسة جزء من أجزاء قلعة الكون"

2-Hosny "قال الأب بوضوح: إن كل رجل و امرأة مثل الجندي، أرسل من قبل الرب؛ ليحرس جزءاً من قلعة هذا الكون"

Discussion

Interpretation: “Or the world will be in danger from the attacks of evil.”

In addition to mentioning masculine and feminine, Al-Jahmani transforms passive to active which is more acceptable in Arabic. Hosny's use of 'the priest' is closer to meaning than 'father' because Kino, in the previous lines, refers to religion. He also maintains a passive form. Hosny's translation maintains a semantic approach with an elegant TT style.

Ex3: Ch5 – P83

“The pale moon dipped in and out of the strands of cloud.”

1-Al-Jahmani "القمر النائص غاص في طيات السحب وأخذ يعاركها"

2-Hosny "ضوء القمر الشاحب الذي كان يظهر ويختفي بين حين وآخر من خلف السحب"

Discussion

Al-Jahmani replaces 'pale' by "نائص" and translates the whole sentence with a communicatively elegant style. Hosny mentions (ضوء) which is not quite satisfying, he translates the whole sentence semantically.

Dipped could be personifies to يسبح as: "أخذ القمر الخافت يسبح في صفحات السحب"

Ex4: Ch 5 – P85

“The darkness was closing in on his family now the evil music filled the night, hung over the mangroves, skirled in the wave beat.”

1-Al-Jahmani "أطبق الظلام على أسرته، وموسيقى الشيطان استولت على الليل، كما" "عجزت المجاذيف عن شق عباب أمواج البحر"

2- Hosny "يحيط الظلام بأسرته، الآن، موسيقى الشر تملأ الليل، تكسو أشجار المانجروف، تظهر في صوت إيقاع الأمواج"

Discussion

Here, Al-Jahmani's translation is more communicative. Hosny follows the ST arrangement. The overstatement is faithfully transmitted by the expression "أطبق الظلام على أسرته". Al-Jahmani goes

beyond meaning in (عجزت المجاذيف) which is improper translation. Hosny proposes the right one. The following could be said "والموسيقى تثير جوا من الشر في كل مكان وصدحت مع خفق الأمواج"

Ex5: Ch5 – P87

"The wind blew freshly into the estuary, a nervous, restless wind with the smell of storm on its breath."

1-Al-Jahmani "ضرب ريح طري مصب النهر والأعصاب، أما قلقه المشحون برائحة العاصفة، فكان كينو يقتات به"

2-Hosny "هبت الرياح على المصب، منتعشة في بداية أمرها، ثم زادت، رياح قوية بلا هواده تثنى بعاصفة"

Discussion

Al-Jahmani mistranslates the real signification of this personification, and makes a mistake by adding 'الأعصاب' to 'ريح طري' phrase, yet, he formulates a good sense of "the smell of storm on its breath" as "أما قلقه المشحون برائحة العاصفة، فكان كينو يقتات به" Hosny successfully converts its idea, to enhance his translation of "The smell of storm on its breath" he uses the metaphorical expression "رياح قوية بلا هواده تثنى" communicatively.

Ex6: Ch5 – P92

"The wind drove off the clouds."

1-Al-Jahmani "أخذت الرياح تقود الغيوم بعيداً، تاركة خلفها سماء صافية"

2-Hosny "خرقت الرياح السحب، ومسحت السماء"

Discussion

Al-Jahmani shapes this sentence in a communicative translation. Hosny's style of translation is rather implied. He uses the verb خرقت which is forceful and then مسحت in two successive phrases. It can be: "ومسحت الرياح سحب السماء" as one sentence with the same meaning.

Ex7: Ch6 – P95

"The waning moon arose, and when it came up the wind died down, and the land was still."

1-Al-Jahmani. "نهض القمر، الذي كان داخلاً في المحاق، وعندما استقام، سقطت الرياح قتيلة، وأصبحت الأرض بلا حراك"

2-Hosny "كان قمرٌ منحصرٌ قد ارتفع، وعندما ظهر جلياً، هدأت الرياح، وظهر الأفق أمامهما، بعد أن كادا يشعلان أن "الأرض قد غابت من حولهما، وأنهما يسيران في العدم"

Discussion

Al-Jahmani adds (طور المحاق) to create an aesthetic effect in TT. The metaphors (the wind died down, and the land was still.) has been replaced by equivalent TL metaphors "سقطت الرياح قتيلة و أصبحت". Hosny's translation is fanciful, he does an excellent job of imagining the scene, yet he transforms personification "the land was still" into another sense as "الأرض قد غابت من حولهما، وأنهما يسيران في العدم". As far as literary translation is involved, translations should be written with a literary style, therefore; TT has fulfilled the stylistic feature of literary language by adopting the communicative approach for this purpose.

Ex8: Ch6 – P95

“The wind cried and whisked in the brush.”

- 1-Al-Jahmani "أصدرت الرياح هسيساً وقرقعة في الأجمة"
2-Hosny "كانت الرياح تصرخ وتصدر صريراً بمرورها بين الأجمة"

Discussion:

Both translators add verbs as أصدرت, كانت and تُصدر respectively.

Al-Jahmani opts for communicative translation, using هسيساً وقرقعة for "cried and whisked", not semantically as Hosny's translation.

Ex9: Ch 6 – P115

“The Song of the Family had become as fierce and sharp and feline as the snarl of a female puma.”

- 1-Al-Jahmani "وأغنية العائلة قدمت قوية وحادة كنعيق البومة"
2-Hosny No translation.

Discussion

Al-Jahmani borrows (owl) for (puma), following semantic style. Since this sentence is missed by Hosny it might be translated as:

"(.) وأصبحت أغنية العائلة صاحبة وعنيفة وستورية كزمرجة حيوان كوجر"

Ex10: Ch 7 – P120

“Her face was hard and lined and leathery with fatigue and with the tightness with which she fought fatigue.”

- 1-Al-Jahmani "كان وجهها قاسياً وعضناً وكأنه مجلود بالسياط، بانث عليه اليقظة في مواجهة الإنهاك"
2-Hosny "كان وجهها متصلباً، وكأنه مصنوع من الجلد، وبه الكثير من التعب والضيق اللذين حاربتهما"

Discussion

By using simile markers, both translations are satisfactory as they highlight the metaphorical expressions honestly. There are noticeable differences between the two translations: Al-Jahmani expresses Juana face as if it is beaten by whips. Hosny likens her face to leather. The second part of this metaphor is translated communicatively by Al-Jahmani: مواجهة الإنهاك and literally by Hosny: حاربتهما.

Conclusions

1.After reading and comparing the two versions, it was found that Al-Jahmani's style was akin to communicative, as he used purely Arabic expressions to deliver the message to the target reader, mixed with reinforcing verbs and terms and addition for some phrases. He produced the same effect on ST readers.

2.Hosny adopted a semantic style in most of his translations, adhering more to the original text and making little effort to alter word meanings or add new sentences, but his translation was satisfactory and appropriate. He successfully combined the rules of the two languages without favoring one over the other and did so in a smooth and easy manner. He was quite restricted with the original text and did not

weaken or underestimate Arabic. He rendered as closely as possible the syntactic structures of the SL.

3. It is to be mentioned that Newmark gives priority to the literal approach. For him, dropping FL from the translated text is not appropriate as it enriches the TT and conveys the precise image properly.

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